

ISSACHAR,

THE *X* 1771

STRONG ASS OVER-BURDENED;

OR, THE

11632.

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GROANS of BRITANNIA FROM THE PIT.

A POEM

DESCRIPTIVE OF THE TIMES.

As on the sea-beat shore Britannia sat,
Of her degenerate sons she faded fame,
Deep in her anxious heart, revolving sad :
Rate was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That hoarse, and hollow, from the bleak surge blew ;
Loose how'd her tresses; rent her azure robe
Hung o'er the deep; from her majestic brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.
Nor ceas'd the copious grief to bathe her cheek ;
Nor ceas'd her sobs to murmur to the main.
Peace discontented, nigh departing, stretch'd
Her dove-like wings; and War, tho' greatly rous'd,
Yet mourns his fetter'd hands. —————— *Thomson.*

PRINTED IN THE PRESENT YEAR,

HAVING given commission to my son J. M.
Poet, to give the world a state of my griefs
and complaints so far as he was competent for
the task—Have now seen and approved of
his humble attempt, and liberty is granted to
publish it forthwith—Do recommend the
faithful hints therein given to the serious at-
tention of my distressed children.

46-9-4-72

BRITANNIA



I S S A C H A R,

The Strong Ass over-burdened.

WHEN good old Jacob bless'd his twelve brave sons,

And did their sev'ral destinies pronounce,
By inspiration, as the spirit taught,
To what they should in future time be brought.
Among the rest was *Issachar*, whom he
Foretold should long a tributarian be.

Of *Issachar* he said, "A sturdy ass,
" Between two burdens crouching shall he pass.
" And being weary with his double load,
" As he went trudging on the tiresome road,
" He saw the land was good, and rest was sweet,
" Then did he unto servitude submit."

Thus, I *Britannia*, am with loads opprest,
So that my spirit finds no place of rest.

The North-wind blew on me so many years,
As sunk my credit in such deep arrears,
I have no hope to rear my head again,
But must submit to endless grief and pain.

Long did I bear and patiently submit,
Till now I'm fallen in a woful Pitt.

If *Issachar* had burdens only two,
Which did him under servitude subdue ;
'Twas hard enough to be with two encumber'd,
But mine are more, alas ! than can be number'd.
Nor is there hope they ever will grow less,
For day by day they more and more increase.

While wars continu'd patiently I bore,
In hopes that peace would happiness restore.
And when the North wind ceas'd so hard to blow
I hop'd I should no more such hardships know.
But now the wars have ceas'd for sev'ral years,
Yet still the burden of my long arrears,
Hath sunk me in the Pitt o'er head and ears !

When Joseph's brethren threw him in a pit,
 Happy for him no water was in it :
 But I am thrown into a Pitt of mire,
 From whence no hope is left me to aspire.
 Burdens on burdens make my body bend,
 Nor have I any view they'll have an end ;
 For day by day they're waxing more and more,
 And much I fear they never will give o'er.

Ere the last war began I thought it best
 To be at quiet, tho' sore enough opprest ;
 But when the war began my burdens grew
 And ev'ry year were taxes laid on new.
 Well, still I bore in hopes the times would mend,
 Soon as this long unnat'ral war should end ;
 The war is ended ; well, and what of that ?
 The taxes must continue ! and for what ?
 Why, lo, my land hath such a debt incur'd,
 That like a mountain it cannot be stirr'd.
 The int'rest of that sum must now be paid,
 So tax on tax must on me still be laid ;
 And stamp on stamp my pocket still must pick,
 Till I am peel'd and gall'd unto the quick.
 The very light that Heav'n bestows so free,
 Must be obscured and shut out from me,
 Unless a tax I for the same will pay,
 I must not now enjoy the light of day.
 And when the sun withdraws his beams at night,
 If I would then enjoy the candle light,
 A double tax I for the same must pay,
 Or dwell in darkness night as well as day.

And tho' by scripture it is plainly shewn,
 God said 'twas bad for man to be alone ;
 Therefore, said he, a wife for him I'll make,
 That of his joys and troubles may partake :
 And for that purpose marriage was ordain'd
 For mutual helps, and issue was obtain'd.
 But if I'm weary of a lonesome life,
 And for these reasons would betroth a wife,
 Yet if I do, a tax I now must pay,
 'Tho' I thereby the word of God obey.

God also said, Be fruitful, multiply;
 And if I do with this command comply,
 For ev'ry child as soon as it is born,
 Behold another tax from me is torn !
 And when pale death doth me of life bereave,
 Ere I can be laid in a peaceful grave,
 Another tax must my oppressors have.

And if in life I should a bargain make,
 For which a writing must be laid in stake,
 A stamp I must provide to make it stand,
 For which I must pay ready cash in hand.
 And when 'tis paid, upon that very day
 Another stamp I for receipt must pay.

Thus must I burden'd be from my first breath,
 Till after I have clos'd mine eyes in death.

Nor are these half the burdens I must bear,
 Unnumber'd still hang heavy on the rear :
 Besides this number I have call'd to mind,
 Untold are numbers that remain behind ;
 For almost all I eat, or drink, or wear,
 A heavy tax exacted is severe.
 If ought I drink but of the cooling spring,
 A tax I must pay down, not to the king,
 But to a set of base oppressive knaves
 Who more than half his subjects sore enslaves.
 Yea, almost all things that I needs must use,
 Ev'n from my hat down to my very shoes,
 For ev'ry article I tribute pay,
 Or must be stript upon the king's high way.
 And if tobacco I would gladly taste,
 Three prices I must pay for it at least.

Now if a journey I'm oblig'd to take,
 Since youthful vigour does my limbs forsake,
 And I'm unable now to trudge on foot,
 If I my limb lay but across a brute ;
 A heavy tribute I must then pay down,
 Ev'n tho' the beast I ride on be mine own.

And if my country should be short of grain
 If I would help from other lands obtain,

Beside the purchase and the costly fraught,
Which I may think is very dearly bought,
Another duty I for it must pay
Ere I can taste thereof without delay.

And now perhaps I may by some be blam'd,
That all these heavy burdens I have nam'd :
Yet after all that I have mention'd here,
Great numbers more hang still upon the rear ;
But now to mention all I hardly dare,
Lest all my children fall into despair.

But why must all these burdens hang on me ?
Britannia asks. The reasons let me see ?

The answer's made. The reasons num'rous are,
Why thou these num'rous burdens still must bear.
Besides the debt, whereof I have made mention,
Consider ev'ry drone must have a pension,
Altho' he nothing do, nor did, nor can,
To be of service, or to God or man.
One knave must fee another that he may
Concur with him, and not his schemes betray.
For desp'rate men sometimes contrive to lay them,
To carry on intrigues, or to betray them.
Such men are known to be of dang'rous sort,
And therefore these must be made tools at court.
Statesmen know well such desp'rate witty knaves
Are dangerous, and much their mind enslaves.
Therefore to such good sinecures they give,
And pensions large that they may quietly live.
Beside these sinecures, a number more
Must be sustain'd thy children to devour.
These make my burdens still more heavy ly,
For ev'ry day they're hunting for supply.
Nor need'st thou look hereon with great surprise,
Confid'ring such great swarms for the excise ;
With other officers of various sorts,
Which must be kept to watch at all thy ports.
These hunt their prey, like robbers, day and night,
Without regard to reason, law or right.
And still the more the duty, less the pay ;
The high bear o'er the low imperious sway.

And these are chosen of the baser sort,

For still one knave another must support.

O George ! I pity thy inglorious reign,
 Which on thy kingdom brings so black a stain ;
 Because thou hast about thee such base men,
 Who make thy throne just like the robber's den.
 Their practices, I'm sure, thou wouldst despise
 Did they not blind thee with perfidious lies.
 The ancestors of thy brave family,
 Were never blind-led by the nose like thee.
 One half have they of thy large Empire lost,
 The other half is gone from thee almost ;
 For it is mortgag'd now above its worth ;
 Such baleful fruits have they for thee brought forth.
 And if such management should still be found,
 They will not leave to thee one foot of ground.
 Thy people too, they have so much opprest,
 They know not where to find a moment's rest.
 Unless they leave thy clime and go abroad,
 To 'scape the weight of the oppressor's rod.
 Yea, they are now emigrating so fast,
 They'll surely leave thy kingdom thin at last.

O therefore open thy deluded eyes,
 Nor listen more to their destructive lies !
 Or they will surely drive thee from thy throne,
 And all thy kingdom will from thee be gone.
 Thy subjects love thee for thy honest heart,
 But grieve to see how thou'rt deceiv'd by art.

O George ! they pity thy impending fate !
 They mourn amain for thy declining state !
 And for thy bright, illustrious, virtuous Queen,
 Such as has ne'er on Britain's throne been seen !
 Yea, they lament for thy great Family,
 While such impending evils they foresee !
 Such princes and princesses ne'er were known,
 So num'rously to grace the *British Throne*.
 And must they all be ruin'd or made slaves,
 By base designing men, perfidious knaves !

And I, *Britannia*, mourn thy fallen state,
 O George ! what has befallen thee of late ?

I pity thy poor subjects so distract,
But, ah! by whom shall they be now redrest?
Good honest George, thou canst not help them now;
To help thyself is more than thou canst do.
God help thee, George, and open now thine eyes,
That thou may'st well distinguish truth from lies.
Thy subjects too, would help thee yet again,
If thou wouldest banish from thee wicked men.
But still if wicked men surround thy throne,
Then all thy hopes of happiness are gone.
Nor need a king e'er hope for peace or rest,
While his poor subjects are so sore opprest.

But ye, my children, yield not to despair;
Besiege the throne of Heav'n, thy servent pray'n.
And tho' ye now are fallen in a Pitt,
The Lord will raise you yet when he sees fit.
He only can these sable clouds dispel,
Rais'd and brought o'er you by the imps of hell.
Let high and low the heav'ly throne implore,
Who knows but God may yet your peace restore.
But if a reformation take not place,
Then ye in vain may hope for farther grace.
For human aid, whatever may be giv'n,
Will prove in vain without the help of Heav'n,
Nor need ye help from thence at all expect,
While ye the sacred laws of Heav'n reject.
Can ye believe God will be on your side,
While ye his just authority deride?
No; if rebellion thus in you abound,
Then surely is incurable your wound.
O then, my children dear, take this my word,
Believe, obey, and humbly trust the Lord.
Then may ye hope he'll bend his gracious ear,
Restore your peace and banish all your fear.
Yea, he will raise you from the fearful Pitt,
And on a stable rock he'll set your feet:
Nor will he leave you more to go astray,
If ye the precepts of his jaws obey.